

Employment Network

# HANDBOOK

for Service Providers

## Grow Your Bottom Line

*By Putting  
Social Security  
Beneficiaries to Work*

DRAFT



# Letter from Dan O'Brien, Acting Associate Commissioner, Office of Employment Support Programs

*Dear Service Provider:*

*We are pleased to provide this handbook to you on how to become an Employment Network (EN) under the “new” Ticket to Work (Ticket) program. By using this guide you will see that becoming an EN is an exciting opportunity for your organization to tap into a unique funding stream as you assist Social Security beneficiaries with disabilities to enter and maintain employment.*

*There is no fee to become an EN and many organizations are qualified to participate. We have assembled a first-rate team to provide ongoing support to you every step of the way.*

*Two important benefits of becoming an EN are:*

- 1. You can connect with hundreds of Social Security disability beneficiaries who want to work; and*
- 2. There is the potential to generate over \$4,800 in income within the first 9 months of a beneficiary's employment. There is even more to be earned over time. To see what your earning potential may be, check out the Employment Network Revenue Estimator at: [www.cessi.net/en\\_estimator/](http://www.cessi.net/en_estimator/).*

*Although the ultimate goal of the Ticket program is to reduce dependence on Social Security disability benefits, beneficiaries who participate also have the opportunity to increase their financial independence and improve their quality of life through gainful employment. The vast majority of people with disabilities want to work. We cannot achieve the goal of employment for beneficiaries without a variety of service providers functioning as ENs. As such, we have made it easy for organizations to participate and access a new source of revenue as they are successful in getting our beneficiaries to work.*

*This handbook outlines nearly every aspect of becoming and operating as an EN. We hope you will join hundreds of organizations nationwide that have experienced great success through the Ticket program.*

*Please contact CESSI, SSA's Program Manager for Recruitment and Outreach, at 1-877-743-8237 (v/tty) for more information.*

*Sincerely,*


*Dan O'Brien*

*Dan O'Brien*

*Acting Associate Commissioner*

*Office of Employment Support Programs*





This Employment Network Handbook for Service Providers was developed by the Social Security Administration's Office of Employment Support Programs. Wilson Resources, Inc. worked under Contract SS00-06-60017 with the SSA Ticket to Work Program Manager for Recruitment and Outreach, CESSI Division of Axiom Resource Management, Inc., to produce the handbook in August 2009.

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# Introduction

## *What Is the Ticket to Work Program?*

The Ticket to Work (Ticket) program is a voluntary employment program administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA). Individuals who are receiving benefits under the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) program and/or the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program based on disabilities are eligible to participate.

The ultimate goal of the Ticket program is to reduce and, whenever possible, eliminate reliance on disability benefits. In addition to moving beneficiaries out of poverty, this will generate savings to the Social Security Trust Fund and the General Revenue Fund.

Secondary goals of the Ticket program are to:

- Offer beneficiaries with disabilities expanded choices when seeking services and supports to enter, re-enter, and/or maintain employment; and
- Increase the independence and self-sufficiency of beneficiaries with disabilities.

To accomplish these goals, SSA is working with CESSI, the Program Manager for Recruitment and Outreach (PMRO) for the Ticket program, to recruit a variety of organizations and service providers to apply to be Employment Networks (ENs). Approved ENs are under contract with SSA to provide or arrange for the provision of employment services, vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, and other services and supports to Ticket-eligible beneficiaries (referred to as Ticket Holders).

Rather than reimbursing ENs for the cost of services provided to Ticket Holders, the Ticket program is outcome-based. It provides payments to ENs as the beneficiaries they serve, and for whom they have Ticket assignments, attain prescribed Milestones and Outcomes associated with work and earnings as they move towards self-supporting employment.

To learn more about the Ticket program, check out the fact sheet “Ticket to Work: The Basics” ([www.cessi.net/ttw/en/basics.asp](http://www.cessi.net/ttw/en/basics.asp)).

## *Choice: An Underlying Principle of the Ticket Program*

A key element of the Ticket program is the concept of choice.

### **Beneficiary Choices**

- A beneficiary can choose whether to participate. The program is both free and voluntary. There is no penalty for choosing not to participate; however, there is a benefit to participating. A beneficiary whose Ticket is assigned and who





is progressing towards his/her employment goal will not be subjected to a medical Continuing Disability Review (CDR). SSA conducts medical reviews periodically to determine a person's continued eligibility for disability benefits.

- Beneficiaries can choose when to seek services. A beneficiary may assign his/her Ticket immediately or wait for months or even years before assigning it.
- Beneficiaries can choose where to seek services and supports, from an EN or from the State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agency.

Approved ENs get to choose between two payment systems.

- The Outcome Payment system provides payments to ENs when the Ticket Holders they are serving attain earnings above the amount designated as Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) and enter zero cash benefit status (i.e., monthly disability checks cease). [To learn more about benefit cessation, see the Social Security Redbook at: [www.ssa.gov/redbook/](http://www.ssa.gov/redbook/).]
- The Outcome/Milestone Payment system provides payments to ENs when the Ticket Holders they are serving attain prescribed Milestones and Outcomes associated with work and earnings, with some Milestone payments based on earnings that equate to part-time employment.

This choice of payment system is made when an entity signs the EN contract. Although this election can be changed once every 12 months, each Ticket Holder remains under the payment system in effect when she/he assigned the Ticket to that EN.

ENs have additional choices, which include:

- What services they will provide under the Ticket program, and
- When to take a Ticket assignment. There is no penalty for deciding not to take a Ticket from a beneficiary. The goal of the Ticket program is to facilitate a good match between the services and supports a Ticket Holder needs to achieve his/her employment goal(s) and the services and supports the EN is offering.

State VR agencies were also given choices in the Ticket legislation. With a long-standing history of serving Social Security beneficiaries with disabilities under the traditional VR Cost Reimbursement program, State VR agencies were given the choice, on a case-by-case basis, of seeking compensation from SSA under the VR Cost Reimbursement program, or to function as an EN and seek compensation under the Ticket program.

### *Regulatory Improvements to the Ticket Program*

The new regulations that went into effect on July 21, 2008, significantly improve and strengthen the Ticket program by making it more viable for ENs to participate.

Regulatory improvements designed specifically for ENs include:

- Improvements to the EN payment systems create significant incentives for more entities to become ENs.
  - Increased payments are available to ENs through the Outcome Payment system.
  - Milestone payments under the Outcome/Milestone Payment system occur earlier in the employment process, are available more often, and are provided at higher rates.
  - Total potential EN payments for Ticket Holders receiving SSDI and SSI benefits are almost equal.
- Changes at SSA and MAXIMUS and changes in administrative procedures have improved the EN application and payment processes.

Regulatory improvements designed for beneficiaries include:

- Access to a broader array of services and supports.
- An expanded pool of Ticket-eligible beneficiaries now includes those classified as Medical Improvement Expected (MIE).
- Changes to the “timely progress” requirements include counting educational attainment as timely progress. Timely progress reviews are conducted by MAXIMUS on behalf of SSA to ensure that a beneficiary who is participating in the Ticket program or receiving services from a VR agency under the Cost Reimbursement program is progressing towards his/her employment goal(s). These reviews are conducted once a calendar year after the beneficiary’s Ticket is assigned to an EN or the State VR agency has notified MAXIMUS that a Cost Reimbursement case is being opened for the beneficiary. Under the revised Ticket regulations, both work and education are counted in determining timely progress towards self-support employment. If a beneficiary is determined to not be making timely progress, the beneficiary’s protection against medical Continuing Disability Reviews will end. Failure to make timely progress does not impact a beneficiary’s ability to participate in the Ticket program.

Some of the regulatory improvements are designed for State VR agencies.

- The traditional VR Cost Reimbursement program and the Ticket program are again viewed as separate programs. This means the State VR agency no longer needs to obtain a beneficiary’s Ticket assignment to be eligible to submit a Cost Reimbursement claim.
- There are strong incentives for increased collaboration between State VR agencies and ENs. Under the new Partnership Plus service delivery option, a State VR agency can serve a Ticket Holder under the Cost Reimbursement





program and when the VR case is closed, the Ticket still has value if the beneficiary takes it to an EN to receive ongoing supports services, job retention services, education and/or training to assist beneficiaries in maintaining and advancing in employment.

To learn more about Partnership Plus and read about how six states are approaching Partnership Plus, check out the brochure, “Partnership Plus: Creating Opportunities for Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Networks to Work Together” (PDF), at: [partnershipplus.cessi.net/docs/PartnerPlusBifold.pdf](http://partnershipplus.cessi.net/docs/PartnerPlusBifold.pdf)

To learn more about how State VR agencies are to function under the new Ticket regulations with regard to Partnership Plus, check out the online Partnership Plus Toolkit at: [partnershipplus.cessi.net/](http://partnershipplus.cessi.net/).

### *Partnership Plus: A Win-Win-Win for All Involved*

The new Partnership Plus option has significant potential to bring increased revenue into the overall service delivery system. ENs can help State VR agency consumers to maintain employment and attain the earnings that qualify for a Cost Reimbursement payment for the VR agency and for Phase 2 Milestone and Outcome payments for the EN under the Ticket program.

For more information on improvements to the Ticket program, check out the fact sheet “Overview: The New Ticket to Work Program,” which includes detailed information on the new EN payment systems and rates. Visit: [www.cessi.net/ttw/MarketingMaterials/FactSheets/SSA-63-024Overview.pdf](http://www.cessi.net/ttw/MarketingMaterials/FactSheets/SSA-63-024Overview.pdf).

# Why Become an Employment Network?

## *Grow Your Organization's Bottom Line*

In 2008, SSA issued revised regulations that significantly improved the Ticket program. ENs can now earn payments earlier in the employment process, more often, and at higher rates. As a matter of fact, your organization may be able to generate income within the first 30 days of a Ticket Holder's employment. In some situations your organization will be able to generate \$4,800 in the first nine months of employment when a Ticket Holder meets prescribed Milestones. (See section on "2009 Ticket to Work EN Payment Chart" on page 13)

*In July 2008, the Social Security Administration's rules for a "significantly improved" Ticket to Work program became effective.*

## *Funds Generated are Discretionary*

There are no SSA rules on how your organization uses the funds generated by the Ticket to Work program.

## *Gain Access to Social Security Beneficiaries*

The SSA provides benefits to qualified people with disabilities under two different programs: Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). More than 12 million Americans are receiving these monthly benefits and many beneficiaries want to work. Once your organization becomes an EN and meets specific requirements, you can request a Beneficiary Referral List CD. The CD lists beneficiaries and their contact information in the zip codes in which you offer services. (See section on "Who Are Ticket Holders?" on page 29 and "Gaining Access to Ticket Holders" on page 29)

## *Reasons for Becoming an EN*

There are many reasons for becoming an EN. There is no fee associated with the application to become an EN. As an EN who is successful in getting Ticket Holders into the workforce, you will have access to a new source of funding that will complement other state and Federal resources available to your organization. If your organization decides at a later date that it no longer wants to be an EN, you can easily withdraw by contacting MAXIMUS, the Operations Support Manager for the Ticket program.

## *Efficient Application and Billing Processes*

Under the new Ticket program, support is available through CESSI, the PMRO for the Ticket program, at every step in the process of becoming an EN. Billing SSA for beneficiary successes requires the completion of an easy to use form and documentation of the beneficiary's earnings. Most payments are made within 30-45 days of submitting a



complete and accurate EN Payment Request Form to MAXIMUS. (See chapter on How Ticket Payments Are Processed.)

### *Fewer Requirements for Service Provision as Compared to Other Sources*

If your organization relies on other Federal and state funding sources to serve individuals with disabilities, you are familiar with legislative and regulatory requirements such as mandating that an individual receive a certain number of hours of on-the-job assistance each month or documenting all activities designed to accomplish certain goals. Once your organization becomes an EN, it is up to the Ticket Holders you are serving and you to determine how much time you will need to work together for the Ticket Holders to accomplish their employment goals. It is in your best interest to assist Ticket Holders engage in work that they both like and are qualified to perform, and that meets the needs of employers. All payments under the Ticket program are based on beneficiaries attaining designated Milestones and Outcomes related to work and earnings after beneficiaries assign their Tickets to ENs, go to work, and move towards self-supporting employment. (See section on EN Revenue Estimator on page 16)

### **For More Information**

For more information on the Ticket program, you will find the following websites very useful:

- SSA's Work Site: [www.ssa.gov/work/](http://www.ssa.gov/work/)
- The CESSI website: [www.cessi.net/ttw](http://www.cessi.net/ttw)
- The MAXIMUS website: [www.yourtickettowork.com](http://www.yourtickettowork.com)

# Overview of the Ticket to Work Program Design

Including the 2009 EN Payment Charts and the EN Revenue Estimator

## *Ticket to Work Support*

SSA contracts with two organizations, CESSI and MAXIMUS, to manage the Ticket to Work program:

- CESSI, SSA's Program Manager for Recruitment and Outreach (PMRO), will help your organization explore the benefits of becoming an EN and complete the application process. CESSI Account Managers are assigned to ENs based on geographic regions of the country or by area of expertise (e.g., mental health, post-secondary education, workforce development system, employers, etc.).

To view CESSI's Recruitment and Outreach website, visit: [www.cessi.net/ttw](http://www.cessi.net/ttw).

To get individualized EN application technical assistance, contact CESSI at: [tickettowork@cessi.net](mailto:tickettowork@cessi.net) or 1-877-743-8237 (v/tty). To sign up for an EN Application Walk-Through, email: [application@cessi.net](mailto:application@cessi.net).

- MAXIMUS, SSA's Operations Support Manager (OSM) for the Ticket to Work program, handles all aspects of the program following approval of the EN's application. Following award of an EN contract, the CESSI Account Manager will connect the EN with a corresponding Regional Account Representative at MAXIMUS. MAXIMUS offers a wide array of training and support services (e.g., sample Individual Work Plan) to help get ENs started and operating as part of the Ticket program.

To visit the MAXIMUS website, go to: [www.yourtickettowork.com](http://www.yourtickettowork.com).

Contact MAXIMUS at 1-866-949-ENVR (3687) (v) or 1-866-833-2967 (tty).

## *Who Can Become an EN?*

There are few limitations on who can become an EN as long as they are qualified to provide or arrange for employment-related services, vocational rehabilitation services, and other types of services and supports that will help Ticket Holders enter and maintain employment. Individuals, family members, educational institutions (post-secondary and vocational/technical), charitable organizations, hospitals, service providers (traditional and non-traditional), employers, State agencies, county and local governments, sole proprietors, and nonprofit and for-profit corporations, as well as partnerships and coalitions of providers are all eligible to become ENs, pending SSA's approval of their EN applications. Federal agencies cannot become ENs and a Ticket Holder cannot function as his/her own EN.



## *2009 EN Payment Rate Charts*

The Ticket program is an outcome-based program. Revenue is realized when a Ticket Holder achieves employment-related Milestones and/or Outcomes. Approved ENs invoice based on the earnings of Ticket Holders who have assigned their Tickets to the EN. Once SSA approves an EN's application, the EN must choose between being compensated under either the Outcome Payment system or the Outcome/Milestone Payment system. When earned, Milestone and Outcome payments are direct deposited into an EN's bank account. SSA does not place any requirements or restrictions on how an EN can use the revenue generated under the Ticket program.

### *Outcome Payment System*

Under the Outcome payment system, an EN can submit a request for payment when a Ticket Holder's earnings exceed the amount SSA designates as Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) and the Ticket Holder enters the zero cash benefit status (i.e., is no

#### **SSDI**

SSDI beneficiaries potentially can work for 12 consecutive months at the SGA level and still receive their entire benefit. SSA provides SSDI beneficiaries with a 9-month Trial Work Period (TWP) during which they will receive their full benefit regardless of their earnings. After they complete their TWP, beneficiaries enter a 36-month extended period of eligibility (EPE) during which they will receive their full benefit if their earnings are below the SGA limit, and no benefit if they have earnings that are over the SGA limit. Also, when SSA finds a beneficiary has worked above SGA in the EPE for the first time and is continuing to engage in SGA, the beneficiary is entitled to a "grace period" during which SSA will pay full benefits for three additional months, regardless of the amount of the earnings.

#### **SSI**

SSA treats work activity for SSI beneficiaries differently. Because it is a means-based program, SSA does not consider SGA once the person has become entitled to benefits. For SSI beneficiaries, SSA does not count the first \$65 of the earnings a beneficiary receives in a month, plus one-half of the remaining earnings. In some cases SSA also applies an additional general income exclusion of \$20. SSA deducts the remainder from the beneficiary's full benefit amount and pays the difference, minus any other deductions, e.g., SSDI. As a result, the earnings level that will cause an SSI beneficiary to lose his or her entire check will vary according to individual circumstances.

longer receiving a monthly disability check). SSA has established two SGA amounts based on type of disability. These amounts increase a little each year. In 2009, the SGA amount for individuals with disabilities other than blindness is \$980 and the SGA amount for individuals who are blind or visually impaired is \$1,640.

Outcome payments are based on the savings that SSA will realize each month a Ticket Holder is no longer receiving a monthly disability check because of work or earnings. These payments are calculated based on the average SSDI or SSI payment for the previous year. Under the Ticket program, a portion of these savings are passed on to the EN that successfully assisted the Ticket Holder in reaching the level of work and earnings that resulted in the cessation of monthly disability benefits.

Under the new Ticket regulations, the amount of savings passed on to the EN was increased from 40 to 67 percent of the monthly savings to SSA. In 2009, an EN that has chosen the Outcome payment system and is successful in getting a Ticket Holder on SSDI to the zero cash benefit status will receive \$676 a month for each month the Ticket Holder stays off cash benefits for up to 36 months (totaling \$24,336). For a Ticket Holder on SSI, the EN would receive \$386 a month for up to 60 months (totaling \$23,160).

### *Outcome/Milestone Payment System*

Under the Outcome/Milestone payment system, SSA pays an EN when a Ticket Holder attains certain Milestones and Outcomes in moving towards self-supporting employment. As explained in this section, this payment option offers two sets of Milestone payments (Phase 1 and Phase 2) as well as subsequent Outcome payments.

*Table 1: Phase 1 Milestone Payments* *2009 Rates*

| Payment Type                                      | Ticket Holder Gross Earnings                      | EN Payment (SSDI) | EN Payment (SSI) |
|---|---|-------------------|------------------|
| Phase 1   |   |                   |                  |
| Milestone 1                                       | \$350/mo for 1 calendar month                     | \$1,211           | \$1,211          |
| Milestone 2                                       | \$700/mo for 3 months w/in 6 months (cumulative)  | \$1,211           | \$1,211          |
| Milestone 3                                       | \$700/mo for 6 months w/in 12 months (cumulative) | \$1,211           | \$1,211          |
| Milestone 4                                       | \$700/mo for 9 months w/in 18 months (cumulative) | \$1,211           | \$1,211          |
| <b>Total Potential Phase 1 Milestone Payments</b> |   | <b>\$4,844</b>    | <b>\$4,844</b>   |





**Table 1** outlines the “Phase 1 Milestone Payments” which are based on a Ticket Holder’s gross earnings. Although SSA can pay an EN for up to four Milestones achieved by a beneficiary after he/she has assigned his/her Ticket to an EN, there are certain factors that can impact an EN’s eligibility for Phase 1 Milestone payments. First, all Phase 1 Milestones require that the beneficiary work at or above the Trial Work (TW) level earnings amount (\$700 a month in 2009). Second, the work must be associated with a real job. Consequently, paid vocational training with no record of continued TW level employment will not meet the criteria for payment. Third, no Phase 1 Milestone payments will be available to the EN if the beneficiary was previously served by a State VR agency under the Cost Reimbursement program and was rehabilitated (i.e., working at the time the VR case was closed). Fourth, Phase 1 Milestone payments may not be available to an EN if the beneficiary achieved the Milestone within the most recent 18-month period prior to the Ticket assignment, as explained in the following more detailed information on the Phase 1 Milestones.

- Phase 1, Milestone 1 is payable when a beneficiary begins a job and has gross earnings at or above the TW level (see: [www.ssa.gov/OACT/COLA/twp.html](http://www.ssa.gov/OACT/COLA/twp.html)) for one calendar month. To simplify the payment process for Phase 1, Milestone 1, it is recommended that an EN submit a payment request once the beneficiary earns a full month of TW level earnings. An EN may submit for Phase 1, Milestone 1 when a beneficiary earns at least 50% of the monthly TW level earnings amount during the first month of employment as long as the monthly earnings would normally constitute TW level earnings or the beneficiary is expected to achieve a full month of TW level earnings within the subsequent 2 months. If earnings reported for Milestone 1 do not represent TW level earnings, SSA will require an explanation with the payment request. Examples of appropriate explanations would be that the Ticket Holder started work in the middle of the month or that the Ticket Holder needed to increase his/her work stamina.

Phase 1, Milestone 1 **will not be available** if the beneficiary has worked above the TW level in the calendar month prior to the beneficiary’s first assignment of his/her Ticket.

- Phase 1, Milestone 2 is payable after the beneficiary works and has gross earnings at or above the TW level earnings amount for 3 out of 6 months. Phase 1, Milestone 2 **will not be available** if the beneficiary has worked above the TW level in 3 out of 6 months prior to the beneficiary’s first assignment of his/her Ticket.
- Phase 1, Milestone 3 is payable after the beneficiary works and has gross earnings at or above the TW level earnings amount for 6 out of 12 months. Phase 1, Milestone 3 **will not be available** if the beneficiary has worked above the TW level in 6 out of 12 months prior to the beneficiary’s first assignment of his/her Ticket.

- Phase 1, Milestone 4 is payable after the beneficiary works and has gross earnings at or above the TW level earnings amount for 9 out of 18 months and the EN provided at least half of the services agreed to in the IWP. Thus, to request payment of Phase 1, Milestone 4, the EN must report on the services provided to the Ticket Holder. Phase 1, Milestone 4 **will not be available** if the beneficiary has worked above the TW level in 9 out of 18 months prior to the beneficiary's first assignment of his/her Ticket.

NOTE: The work and earnings that trigger all Phase 1 Milestone payments are cumulative, meaning TW level earnings that count towards one Phase 1 Milestone payment also count towards the next one.

*Table 2: Phase 2 Milestone Payments*

*2009 Rates*

| Type  | Ticket Holder Gross Earnings                     | EN Payment (SSDI)            | EN Payment (SSI)             |
|---|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Phase 2   | Gross > SGA (\$980/non-blind; \$1,640 for blind) | \$363/mo.<br>(up to 11 mos.) | \$207/mo.<br>(up to 18 mos.) |
| Total Phase 2 Payments                                |  | \$3,993                      | \$3,726                      |
| <b>Total Potential Ticket Payments Phases 1 and 2</b> |  | <b>\$8,837</b>               | <b>\$8,570</b>               |

Table 2 outlines "Phase 2 Milestone Payments," which are also based on the Ticket Holder's 'gross' earnings. In order for the EN to continue invoicing the Ticket program after the Phase 1 Milestones have been reached, the Ticket Holder must have gross monthly earnings that exceed SSA's SGA level, i.e., \$980 a month for Ticket Holders with disabilities other than blindness and \$1,640 a month for Ticket Holders who are blind (2009 rates). If these criteria are met and as long as the Ticket Holder continues to work and earn at this level, the EN can invoice the Ticket program for Phase 2 Milestone payments at the rate of \$363 a month for up to 11 months if the Ticket Holder is a SSDI recipient and \$207 a month for up to 18 months if the Ticket Holder is a SSI recipient.

The potential total EN Ticket payments for Phase 1 and 2 Milestones (Tables 1 and 2) is \$8,837 for Ticket Holders who are SSDI recipients and \$8,570 for SSI recipients.



*Table 3: Outcome Payments*

*Under Outcome/Milestone Payment System*

*2009 Rates*

| Payment Type   | Ticket Holder Net Earnings   | EN Payment (SSDI)            | EN Payment (SSI)             |
|--|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Outcome Phase  | Net Earnings > SGA<br>(\$980/non-blind; \$1,640/blind)<br>AND zero cash benefit status | \$363/mo.<br>(up to 36 mos.) | \$207/mo.<br>(up to 60 mos.) |
| Total Outcome Payments   |  | \$13,068                     | \$12,420                     |
| Total Potential Ticket Payments<br>(Phases 1 & 2 and Outcomes) |  | \$21,905                     | \$20,990                     |

Table 3 outlines the “Outcome Payments” available to an EN if the Ticket Holder continues working, has net monthly earnings that exceed SGA (i.e., \$980/month for Ticket Holders with disabilities other than blindness and \$1,640 for Ticket Holders who are blind or visually impaired in 2009), and enters the zero cash benefit status (i.e., no longer receiving a disability check from SSA) because of his or her work or earnings. If these criteria are met, the EN can submit a request for payment to MAXIMUS and receive \$363 a month for up to 36 months for SSDI recipients or \$207 a month for up to 60 months for SSI. This totals \$13,068 for SSDI recipients and \$12,420 for SSI recipients. When a Ticket Holder is dually eligible for both SSDI and SSI, the EN is paid at the higher SSDI rate.

In most cases, if the Ticket Holder remains with the same EN and meets all of the earnings’ Milestones as outlined in Tables 1, 2, and 3, and the Ticket Holder does not have a recent work history and was not placed in employment by a State VR agency, the EN can generate over \$20,000 for each Ticket Holder that is successfully employed over the periods of time designated for SSDI or SSI (see Table 3). As stated earlier, these payments will be reduced if the Ticket Holder has a recent work history or if the State VR agency closed the case “successfully rehabilitated.”

If a Ticket Holder moves into the Outcome payment phase before an EN receives all available Milestone payments, there is a reconciliation payment that is made at the time of the 12th Outcome payment. This one-time lump sum payment would be equal to any unpaid Milestone payments that would otherwise have been available to the EN with the Ticket assignment.

### *EN Revenue Estimator*

The EN Revenue Estimator will help your organization estimate 3, 5, or 10 years of revenue from the Ticket program when you assist SSA beneficiaries to become gainfully

employed. The estimator offers various scenarios and calculates payments based on the number of people your organization serves who become employed and their earnings. The estimator can be accessed online at: [www.cessi.net/en\\_estimator/](http://www.cessi.net/en_estimator/).

Although each organization is different and results will vary, using the estimator can help you determine your organization's potential revenues from the Ticket program using estimates based on your previous experiences with beneficiaries with disabilities.

If your organization has never provided employment services before, it will be more difficult for you to estimate EN revenue. If possible, consult with an experienced service provider with whom you do not compete or a trade association representing employment service providers to determine what might be possible.

## Revenue Estimator Example - Employment Success, Inc. (ESI)

The following is an example of an agency and its estimate of Ticket payments over a 3-year period. Employment Success, Inc. (ESI) is an EN. This employment service provider conservatively estimates that, on average, one Ticket Holder it serves will go to work each month. Based on modest projections of the number of Ticket Holders served and the length of time they will retain their jobs and their expected earnings, the results project the potential Ticket revenue over a three year period (Table 4). ESI goes to the online revenue estimator located at [www.cessi.net/en\\_estimator/](http://www.cessi.net/en_estimator/) and then answers the questions below.

### EN Revenue Estimator Questions:

1. *On average how many of the Ticket Holders you are working with will start working each month? 1*
2. *What percentage of these Ticket Holders receives SSI only? 50*

The screenshot shows the 'Employment Network Revenue ESTIMATOR' web application. The page has a blue header with the 'Ticket to Work' logo and navigation links. The main content area is white with a blue border. It contains a welcome message, instructions, and a form with three input fields: 'Total Starting Work', 'Number in A Category', and 'Percent'. A 'Calculate' button is located below the form. The page also includes a disclaimer and contact information.

The responses to questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 should be percentages and must total 100%.

3. *What percentage of these Ticket Holders will reach ONLY 1 Phase 1 Milestone? 10*
4. *What percentage of these Ticket Holders will reach ONLY 2 Phase 1 Milestones? 20*
5. *What percentage of these Ticket Holders will reach ONLY 3 Phase 1 Milestones? 50*
6. *What percentage of these Ticket Holders will reach ALL Phase 1 Milestones? 10*
7. *What percentage of these Ticket Holders will attain ALL Phase 1 and Phase 2 Milestones, but NO Outcome payments? 5*





8. *What percentage of these Ticket Holders will complete ALL Milestones and Outcome months?* 5
9. *What percentage of beneficiaries worked with state VR and was closed in work before receiving the Ticket assignment?* 0
10. *What is the length of time you would like to see results?* 3 years

**Table 4: Example of ESI Employment Network**

**Payment Estimator Results<sup>1</sup>**

| Month            | 1          | 2       | 3       | 4     | 5     | 6     | 7     | 8     | 9     | 10    | 11    | 12    | Year Total |
|------------------|------------|---------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------------|
| Year 1           | 1,211      | \$1,211 | \$2,422 | 2,422 | 2,422 | 3,633 | 3,633 | 2,422 | 4,844 | 3,996 | 4,359 | 4,359 | \$ 36,934  |
| Year 2           | 4,359      | 3,148   | 5,570   | 4,722 | 5,085 | 3,874 | 5,085 | 3,874 | 5,085 | 3,874 | 5,085 | 3,874 | 53,635     |
| Year 3           | 5,085      | 5,085   | 3,874   | 5,085 | 3,511 | 4,722 | 3,511 | 4,722 | 4,722 | 4,722 | 4,359 | 4,359 | 53,757     |
| Grand Total:     | \$ 144,326 |         |         |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |            |
| Residual Income: | \$ 25,175  |         |         |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |            |

In the example, ESI sees that it can generate between approximately \$37,000 and \$53,000 per year by placing, on average, one Ticket Holder each month. The Residual Income represents the additional income that would be available to ESI as the Ticket Holders served continue working beyond the first three years calculated by the Revenue Estimator. This was using a very conservative estimate of only 10% of Ticket Holders (N=1.2) reaching all Phase 1 Milestones.

NOTE: The residual income reflects the income that would be available to an EN that did not take any additional Ticket assignments after the 3-year period used for the EN Revenue Estimator, based on those Ticket Holders who were hired during that 3-year period continuing to work within the parameters established by the estimator (i.e., which are reflected in the questions asked and your responses to those questions). Please note that the default setting on the estimator is set to show that no Ticket Holders were served by VR first; therefore, the loss of the Phase 1 Milestones payments for Partnership Plus cases would be reflected only if you changed this response.

### ***Ticket Partnerships with Employers***

Although employers can apply to be ENs, some may prefer to partner with your organization in working with beneficiaries with disabilities. For most organizations, Ticket payments are non-restricted funds. This means they can be used any way the organization chooses. For example, a portion of the Ticket payments could be used as a hiring incentive for an employer. Or, if a beneficiary needs support services to retain his/her job, an EN could use funds received under the Ticket program to reimburse the employer for additional training/mentoring services provided through the employer. Research has found that employees with disabilities who are connected to their coworkers before their job begins or early in their employment are more likely to retain their jobs.

<sup>1</sup> This is an estimate based on an example. Results will vary by agency.

## *State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies and Ticket to Work*

As mentioned earlier, the new Ticket regulations create exciting new opportunities for ENs to partner with State VR agencies in meeting the long-term employment needs of Ticket Holders. SSA will now pay a State VR agency under the traditional Cost Reimbursement program and an EN under the Ticket program for assisting the same beneficiary under the same Ticket. However, SSA will only do this based on the provision of sequential, not concurrent, services. Under this new “Partnership Plus” option, a Ticket Holder may receive VR services to meet his/her intensive up-front service needs and, after the VR case is closed, assign his/her Ticket to an EN to receive ongoing or follow-along support services. As in the past, the State VR agency may submit for Cost Reimbursement when the beneficiary reaches 9 months of net earnings at or above the SGA level (after applicable deductions) within a 12-month period.

The EN that gets the beneficiary’s Ticket assignment would provide ongoing or follow-along support services and, subsequently, be eligible for any earned Phase 2 Milestones and Outcome payments. Phase 2 Milestones are triggered when a beneficiary’s ‘gross’ earnings are above the SGA level and Outcome payments are triggered when the beneficiary is in zero cash benefit status because of work or earnings. Access to this new funding to support ongoing or follow-along support services will likely result in increasing numbers of beneficiaries achieving nine months of net SGA earnings, allowing State VR agencies to submit more cases for Cost Reimbursement.

This change can be an excellent source of assistance for Ticket Holders as VR is not designed to provide long-term support or follow-along/ongoing support services as envisioned for ENs under the new Ticket regulations.

In some states, ENs and State VR agencies are designing interagency agreements to facilitate equitable revenue sharing and a coordinated system of services for beneficiaries. Such agreements are an important component of a service delivery system that expands the scope of services available to beneficiaries and facilitates the coordination of services across agencies. To promote the development of viable interagency agreements, CESSI, SSA’s PRMO, is working with several States to develop models of collaborative relationships to demonstrate how the Partnership Plus option can assist beneficiaries in both securing and maintaining employment.

For example, Indiana’s Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) operates under a “payment for results” model with its vendors. Aspects of this model are being carried over to Indiana’s approach to Partnership Plus where VRS will serve all beneficiaries under the Cost Reimbursement program. VR Counselors will encourage all beneficiaries to assign their Tickets to ENs after VRS closes their cases. VRS will be asking ENs to share documentation of earnings with VRS to facilitate reimbursement. VRS is planning to offer a post-employment payment of \$1,000 to ENs that are successful in stabilizing beneficiaries in employment and getting them to eight months of net SGA earnings. When the beneficiary attains the ninth month of earnings above SGA, VRS will submit a Cost Reimbursement claim that includes the \$1,000 payment to the EN for job retention services.





Partnership Plus is specific to VR/EN partnerships when a State VR agency is serving a Ticket Holder under the Cost Reimbursement program. If a State VR agency chooses to serve a Ticket Holder as an EN under the Ticket program and the beneficiary assigns his/her Ticket to a different EN after the beneficiary's VR case is closed, it would be the same as two ENs serving the same beneficiary due to a change in Ticket assignment.

### *Splitting EN Payments*

If two ENs serve the same Ticket Holder due to a change in Ticket assignment (or a State VR agency functioning as an EN and another EN serve the same Ticket Holder), the EN that first had the Ticket assignment may be entitled to a portion of any future Ticket payments. In some instances, the two ENs will have a written agreement (or come to an agreement) that spells out how the EN payments will be split. If no such agreement exists, MAXIMUS, SSA's Operations Support Manager for the Ticket program, will decide how the EN payments should be split based on the services provided by each EN and how those services contributed to the Ticket Holder's attainment of the specific Milestone and/or Outcome payments being requested. The MAXIMUS decision will be based on the ENs submission of a completed "EN Split Payment Request Form." This form can be found on the MAXIMUS website at: [www.yourtickettowork.com](http://www.yourtickettowork.com).

### *EN Capitalization Resources: Generating Start-Up Funds*

In response to the needs of ENs for upfront capital to implement employment and support services for beneficiaries under the Ticket program, MAXIMUS is managing the EN Capitalization Education program for SSA. The Ticket to Work program – EN Capitalization Education program is designed to expand EN training to include delivery of information and education on alternative sources of funding. The purpose of this program is to enable more organizations to participate in the Ticket program as ENs by increasing access to funding sources that can support upfront costs of providing employment and support services.

The EN Capitalization Education program, available on disk and online at [www.yourtickettowork.com/en\\_cap\\_resource](http://www.yourtickettowork.com/en_cap_resource), helps ENs secure funding for start-up costs by providing detailed information about how to obtain funding from government grants, foundations, and private organization. The EN Capitalization program includes a resource directory and a comprehensive fundraising guide.

For EN Funding Opportunities, go to: [www.yourtickettowork.com/en\\_cap\\_resource](http://www.yourtickettowork.com/en_cap_resource). See link to the Funding Opportunities Page.

NOTE: The listing is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all of the disability-related grants and inclusion on the list does not guarantee funding.

For consultation on grant research for your organization's particular needs, please contact Donna De Julius at: 1-703-236-6675 or [donnamdejulius@maximus.com](mailto:donnamdejulius@maximus.com).

# How to Become an EN

## Forms and Other Requirements

Information relating to the operational aspects of being an EN under the Ticket program is handled by MAXIMUS, the Operations Support Manager (OSM) under contract with SSA, and can be found at: [www.yourtickettowork.com](http://www.yourtickettowork.com).

CESSI, SSA's Program Manager for Recruitment and Outreach (PMRO), will help your organization explore the benefits of becoming an EN and complete the application process. CESSI Account Managers are assigned to ENs based on geographic regions of the country or by areas of expertise. If you have any questions or need guidance in completing the EN RFP, a CESSI Account Manager is ready to assist your company every step of the way.

To sign up for an EN Application Walk-Through, e-mail: [application@cessi.net](mailto:application@cessi.net). To get individualized EN application technical assistance, contact CESSI at: [application@cessi.net](mailto:application@cessi.net) or call 1-877-743-8237 (v/tty).



### *Where Do I Get the Forms to Get Started?*

The application to become an EN, called a Request for Proposal (RFP), complete with all instructions and requisite forms, is available for review and downloading at [www.ssa.gov/work/enrpf.html](http://www.ssa.gov/work/enrpf.html). NOTE: The RFP refers to an "Offeror" which is the organization applying to become an EN.

**Before you begin the RFP process, you will need the following items. All information must be current.**

- ☐ **EIN:** Your Employer Identification Number (EIN) or Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN). Your company must have an EIN, and the EIN must be issued in the name of the Offeror listed in the EN RFP. You cannot use your Social Security Number in lieu of an EIN. An EIN may be obtained from the Internal Revenue Service by calling 1-800-829-4933 or via the web at: [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).
- ☐ **DUNS:** The Offeror name listed in the EN RFP must have a matching Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and profile at Dun & Bradstreet. The DUNS number is a 9-digit number assigned by Dun & Bradstreet Information Services. Every EN must have a DUNS number. The DUNS number is the Federal Government Contractor Identification code for all procurement related activities. If your organization does not already have a DUNS number, one may be obtained directly from Dun & Bradstreet at 1-866-705-5711, or you may apply online at: [www.dnb.com](http://www.dnb.com).



To apply online at: [www.dnb.com](http://www.dnb.com):

- Home Page, go to “Get a D&B DUNS® Number”;
- Next go to “U.S. Government Contractors, Vendors and Grant Recipients”; and
- “Click here to request your DUNS number via the web.”

You will generally receive your DUNS number within 24-48 hours. There is no cost to apply.

- ☐ **CCR:** Register or verify that your organization’s DUNS number is registered as a Federal Contractor on the Central Contractor Registration ([www.ccr.gov](http://www.ccr.gov)), the primary registrant database for all Federal government contractors. This is a requirement of all ENs and an important step in the application process.

If your organization previously registered on [www.ccr.gov](http://www.ccr.gov), please log into your CCR account to ensure your CCR registration is active.

If inactive, renew your registration by clicking on the “Update or Renew Registration” link on [www.ccr.gov](http://www.ccr.gov) and follow the instructions provided. You must renew your company’s CCR registration every year. If you are unsure whether your company has registered as a Federal contractor in the past, you should conduct a search on the CCR website (using your DUNS number) prior to completing a new registration. If, after the search, your company does not appear in the registration database, register by clicking on “Start New Registration” and follow the instructions provided.

## **Other Important Information That Must be Submitted**

- ☐ **EN QUALIFICATIONS:** Your organization must submit evidence demonstrating that your staff is qualified to provide or arrange for employment-related services, vocational rehabilitation services, or other types of services and supports to assist beneficiaries to obtain and maintain employment.

**Demonstrating Qualifications to be an EN:** To be approved to be an EN, your organization must demonstrate that it is qualified to provide or arrange for the provision of employment-related services, vocational rehabilitation services, or other types of services and supports to assist Ticket Holders to enter and maintain employment. A copy of a current license or certification to provide such services in your State is sufficient. Having either a certification or accreditation from a national rehabilitation and employment services accrediting body or having a vendor agreement or contract with your State VR agency or another State agency to provide employment-related services will also satisfy this requirement. If you do not have such evidence, you will need to submit a qualifications statement and a business plan with your EN application, explaining how you are going to serve Ticket Holders. The new EN RFP explains exactly what should be included in this business plan.

- ❑ **GENERAL OR PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE:** Your EN's name must be on your insurance policy. A copy of the insurance policy or a certificate of insurance signed by the agent or broker is necessary before an EN contract can be awarded. All ENs must have insurance as described below. (The insurance must be maintained during the entire term of the contract.):
  - All contractors are required to maintain either general liability or professional liability insurance with a minimum coverage of \$500,000 per occurrence.
  - In addition, contractors who provide health care services are required to obtain Medical Liability Insurance with a minimum coverage of \$500,000 per occurrence.
- ❑ **ACH VENDOR/MISCELLANEOUS PAYMENT ENROLLMENT FORM:** Your EN name must be on the direct deposit bank account used for EN payments. To complete the ACH Vendor/Miscellaneous Payment Enrollment Form, you will need your company's financial institution information. This includes your bank's Automated Clearing House (ACH) Coordinator name, 9-digit routing transit number, and the signature and title of an authorized bank official. This form is used for ACH payments with an addendum record that contains payment-related information processed through the Vendor Express Program.

### *EN RFP Checklist*

**Download the EN RFP: [www.ssa.gov/work/enrfp.html](http://www.ssa.gov/work/enrfp.html).**

Don't let the length of the RFP (92 pages) frighten you. Much of it is background information on the Ticket program, information on the EN payment systems and the payment process, and information on the protection of personal information about beneficiaries. It also includes contract boilerplate language and several pages of assurances.

While you need to become familiar with all of the information in the RFP, you only need to complete Part IV—EN Proposal Documentation Requirements (pages 61 through 90) and the forms required for security clearances, as described in this section. For an EN application to be complete, these completed sections must be submitted along with documentation of your qualifications to provide EN services and documentation of your liability and, as appropriate, medical liability insurance.





## Part III—Contract Clauses

### Section 5 H. EN Security and Suitability Requirements (pages 38 through 45)

Please note that you must submit the security and suitability forms at the time you submit your EN proposal. The only form that requires mailing is the Applicant Fingerprint Chart.

#### ☐ **Optional Form 306, Declaration of Federal Employment**

This form must be completed for each EN contractor employee who acquires, handles or has access to SSA beneficiary personally identifiable information (PII) in performing duties under an EN contract.

#### ☐ **Beneficiary CD**

For ENs who wish to receive beneficiary information in CD format directly from MAXIMUS to help market their services, a more thorough background check will be required for the staff person designated as the “CD Manager.” A simple background check using Optional Form 306, as described above, will be required for those EN employees who are provided beneficiary information from the CD by the CD Manager as long as that information is limited to the beneficiary’s name, address and telephone number, and the contact information for any representative payee. The CD Manager and any other EN employee who is provided information from the CD, in addition to the beneficiary’s name, address and telephone number and the representative payee contact information, will be required to undergo the more thorough background check, which includes submission of the following:

- Optional Form 306, Declaration of Federal Employment
- Form FD-258, Applicant Fingerprint Chart
- Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) Authorization Form
- Standard Form (SF) 85, Questionnaire for Non-Sensitive Positions

### Section 5 J. SSA Security Awareness: Contractor Personnel Security Certification (page 46)

This form does not need to be submitted as part of the EN application. Within 45 days of the EN contract being awarded, each employee working under the EN contract must read and sign this form to certify that she/he has received and understands SSA’s Security Awareness Training requirements. Within 60 days of the contract award, the EN contractor must confirm that all EN employees working under the contract have signed this form by sending an email to the ENCT (ENContracts@ssa.gov). Each employee must be listed by name.

New employees must read and sign this form within 45 days of beginning work on the EN contract and the contractor must send an email to: security.awareness.training@ssa.gov, with a copy to the ENCT

(ENContracts@ssa.gov), to confirm that any new employees have completed this form. These signed forms must be kept on file at the EN for a period of three years.

Please make sure you read this section for additional requirements.

**Section 5 L. Protecting and Reporting the Loss of Personally Identifiable Information: Responsibilities Concerning Individual Employees (pages 56-59 with instructions for completing this worksheet found on page 60)**

This information is not to be submitted with the EN application. It applies only if and when a violation of SSA's requirements regarding personally identifiable information (PII) has occurred.

**Part IV—EN Proposal Documentation Requirements (pages 61 through 90)**

**Section 1**

- ☐ **Standard Form 1449, Solicitation/Contract/Order for Commercial Items**  
(page 62)  
Complete blocks 17a, 17b, 30a, 30b, and 30c.

**Section 2**

- ☐ **Completed Section 2, EN Information Sheet** (pages 64 through 72)  
This section asks for basic EN information. You will need to have your Employer Identification Number (EIN) and your Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number.

**Item G, Location of Services**

If you will be providing services in additional or different locations, an Addendum Information Sheet should be completed for each additional or different office location that your organization wants to be listed publicly for beneficiaries to access through the online EN Directory at: [www.yourtickettowork.com](http://www.yourtickettowork.com). Please fill out one addendum for EACH different location (See Section 3, page 73 of the RFP).

- ☐ **CCR**  
Using your DUNS, your CCR registration must be in an “active” status before an award can be made and during the contract performance period. You may check on your CCR status (using the search function) or register your DUNS number by visiting: [www.ccr.gov](http://www.ccr.gov).
- ☐ **EN Payment System Election**  
The EN will be paid in accordance with the payment system elected in its proposal. The two payment system options are Outcome and Outcome/Milestone. SSA allows an EN to change its payment system once every 12 months. Any change in the elected EN payment system will apply to Ticket





assignments after the EN changes its elected payment system. The EN's earlier elected payment system will continue to apply to all Ticket assigned prior to the change in election. An EN cannot unassign a Ticket or have a beneficiary unassign his/her Ticket in order to circumvent this rule.

**□ EN Qualifications Requirements Documentation**

You must demonstrate your qualifications to become an EN by submitting with your EN proposal one (1) of the following:

1. A copy of the license or certification as required by State law to provide employment services, VR services or other employment-related support services. OR
2. Evidence of certification or accreditation from national rehabilitation and employment services accrediting bodies (e.g., CRC, CARF, ACRE, USPPRA or equivalent) that establishes an Offeror's qualifications to provide or arrange for the provision of employment services, VR services or other support services, where there is no State law requirement. OR
3. Proof of a contract or vendor agreement with a State VR agency or other State agency (e.g., State Medicaid Waiver contract) to provide employment, VR, or other employment-related support services. OR
4. In the absence of 1-3 above, a qualifications statement and business plan. Please carefully read Part II Statement of Work, Item C, Submitting Proof of EN Qualifications for the requirements of this business plan. The qualifications statement must clearly demonstrate the applicant's expertise and/or experience in providing employment services, VR services and/or supports services. The business plan must describe how the applicant will provide employment services, VR services or other support services to assist beneficiaries in achieving their employment goals and advancing towards self-supporting employment. The business plan must include the following:
  - How the applicant will recruit beneficiaries;
  - The types of beneficiaries who will be recruited;
  - The services to be provided beneficiaries;
  - An explanation of how the applicant's services will enable beneficiaries to maximize their economic self-sufficiency and advance to sustained, self-supporting employment;
  - The time frame for setting up EN operations;
  - A goal for the number of Ticket assignments accepted in the first and second years of operations;
  - The estimated revenue that will be generated from the Ticket program during that time frame (see [www.cessi.net/en\\_estimator](http://www.cessi.net/en_estimator) to estimate

the revenue your organization can potentially generate from the Ticket program);

- Information on revenue sources outside the Ticket program (considering that ENs are paid by SSA solely as a result of the beneficiary's achievement of certain work-related Milestones and/or Outcomes).

#### ☐ **Proof of Liability Insurance**

Please attach a copy of the insurance certificate with your EN application. Make sure the name on the insurance policy is the same name as the one on the EN application.

### **Section 3**

#### ☐ **EN Information Sheet (Addendum) (page 74)**

Complete only if you will be providing services in multiple locations (see item G on page 65), and wish the additional locations to appear in the EN Directory found at: [www.yourtickettowork.com](http://www.yourtickettowork.com).

### **Section 4**

#### ☐ **Standard Form 3881, ACH Vendor/Miscellaneous Payment Enrollment Form (page 76)**

Please remember to complete Payee/Company Information and Financial Institution Information sections. The shaded signature block at the bottom of the form must be signed by the bank official. The ACH Vendor/Miscellaneous Payment Enrollment Form must be completed and submitted with your proposal to allow SSA to direct payments electronically to your designated bank account. We recommend that an official of your company's financial institution complete the Financial Institution Section of this form.

Under the portion of the form entitled Financial Institution Information, the "Depositor Account Title" is the name that should appear on the account. This should be the same name as the one on the EN application.

The information you provide on this form is for government use only to facilitate the electronic payment from SSA to the EN contractor and will not be released to entities outside of MAXIMUS (the OSM for the Ticket program), SSA, or your designated financial institution.

### **Section 5**

#### ☐ **Offeror Representations and Certifications (pages 77 through 90)**

Complete all requested information. If you have completed your annual representations and certifications electronically, please complete and submit paragraph (b) on page 79. The representations and certifications contain grey shaded areas that do not need to be completed.



## *Submitting Your RFP*

**Electronically/Fax Combined:** The fastest, most efficient and preferred way to submit the RFP is to complete all of the applicable sections of the RFP in Word, save the document, and email it to: [ENContracts@ssa.gov](mailto:ENContracts@ssa.gov). Then fax your supporting documentation (e.g., signature pages, proof of EN qualifications, proof of liability insurance, and the suitability forms) to (410)597-0429.

**Electronically:** Another option is to complete all of the applicable sections of the RFP and save them electronically. Then put the entire package together, including the supporting documentation (e.g., proof of EN qualifications and proof of liability insurance), scan the complete package, save it and email it to: [ENContracts@ssa.gov](mailto:ENContracts@ssa.gov).

**TIP:** If you do not have a high quality scanner, go to an office supply house or copy center and request that they scan the entire document for you and save it to a CD or jump/thumb drive. Then you can email it from your computer to: [ENContracts@ssa.gov](mailto:ENContracts@ssa.gov).

**Fax:** As an alternative if you are unable to submit the completed RFP electronically, you may fax the completed RFP and supporting documents to (410) 597-0429.

**Mail:** It is not advisable to submit your application by mail as it can significantly delay the processing of the application.

Once you have completed and submitted your EN application using one of the recommended methods described above, Social Security's EN Contracts Team is available to explain the EN contract award process and provide technical support with any items missing from your EN RFP. To contact the EN Contracts Team, email: [ENContracts@ssa.gov](mailto:ENContracts@ssa.gov).

# How to Find SSA Beneficiaries

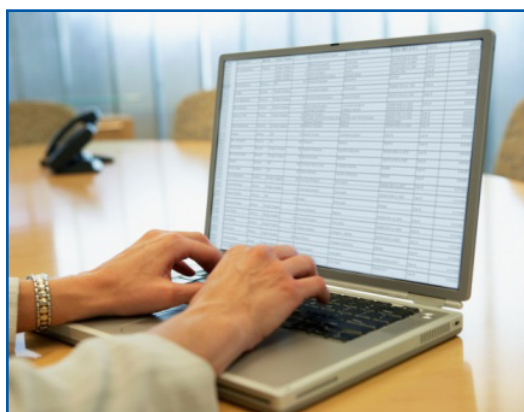
## *What Happens after Your EN Application Is Approved?*

After an EN's application is approved, the CESSI Account Manager that helped the EN through the application process will connect the EN with a corresponding Regional Account Representative at MAXIMUS, SSA's OSM. MAXIMUS handles all aspects of the Ticket program following approval of an EN application. MAXIMUS offers a wide array of training (e.g., Ticket Training Tuesdays) and support services (e.g., a sample Individual Work Plan) to help ENs get started and operating as part of the Ticket program. Contact MAXIMUS at 1-866-949-ENVR (3687) (v) or 1-866-833-2967 (tty).

## *Who Are Ticket Holders?*

SSA determines which Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiaries are eligible to receive Tickets. Generally, eligible beneficiaries:

- Are 18 or older and have not reached age 65 (ages 18 through 64); and
- Are Title II disability beneficiaries - SSDI (exceptions are stated in the legislation and regulations); and
- Are in "current pay status" for monthly Title II cash benefits based on disability (exceptions stated in the legislation and regulations); and/or
- Are a Title XVI disability beneficiary - SSI (exceptions stated in the legislation and regulations); and
- Are in "current pay status" for monthly Ticket XVI cash benefits based on disability or blindness.



## *Gaining Access to Ticket Holders*

The first thing you will want to do to gain access to Ticket Holders is to look at the individuals you are already serving. In some cases, you will have Ticket Holders on your existing caseload. MAXIMUS maintains a list of all beneficiaries with Tickets available for assignment and administers the process for assigning and unassigning Tickets. As an approved EN, you can contact MAXIMUS to determine whether individuals on your caseload or individuals with disabilities who are your employees are beneficiaries with Tickets available for assignment. MAXIMUS can also help you determine the remaining value of a Ticket that has been assigned in the past. Simply contact your Regional Account Representative at MAXIMUS.



## *Marketing Your EN to Ticket Holders*

Marketing to Ticket Holders can be accomplished in a number of ways:

- Invite Ticket Holders to attend orientations and events;
- Share job opportunities and announce upcoming job fairs;
- Contact CESSI to participate in a local Work Incentive Seminar Event (WISE). To learn more, visit: [www.cessi.net/wise](http://www.cessi.net/wise);
- Develop and share marketing materials, such as a brochure outlining the services you or your organization provide;
- Conduct phone campaigns;
- Work with your State VR agency to identify potential Partnership Plus cases, i.e., Ticket Holders whose VR cases are being closed and who could benefit from ongoing support services provided by an EN; and/or
- Utilize the monthly “Beneficiary CD” that is available to ENs that meet SSA security requirements (see next section for details).

NOTE: If your outreach activities involved telephone calls to beneficiaries, make sure your message does not include anything that would identify the person being called as a Social Security beneficiary. This would be a violation of SSA rules regarding the sharing of personally identifiable information. Make your message simple and to the point, such as: “If you are interested in seeking assistance in going to work, call this number.”

## *Handling Personally Identifiable Information on Ticket Holders*

All EN employees who will be acquiring, handling or have access to personally identifiable information (PII) in the completion of their EN duties must undergo a limited background check by SSA staff. To request a background check, the EN employee must submit Optional Form 306, Declaration of Federal Employment. This form, which requires the employee’s name, Social Security Number, date of birth and city of birth, is available electronically at: [www.opm.gov/forms/pdf\\_fill/of0306.pdf](http://www.opm.gov/forms/pdf_fill/of0306.pdf).

**Beneficiary CD:** On a monthly basis, MAXIMUS can generate a list of beneficiaries in your local area that have Tickets available for assignment and provide that information to you as an approved EN in CD format. These CDs include the names, addresses, telephone numbers, years of birth, limited information on work history, and the last two digits of the beneficiaries’ Social Security Numbers, as well as the contact information for beneficiary representative payees when applicable. The CD is provided to the EN to help the EN market its services to Ticket-eligible beneficiaries in its service delivery area. The CD is intended for internal use only and information contained on the CD cannot be shared with individuals outside the EN.



To obtain a beneficiary CD, someone employed by the EN must be designated as the CD Manager. Only the CD Manager would be allowed to receive, maintain and/or handle the beneficiary CD and, as deemed necessary, distribute selected information from the CD to other employees of the EN. Due to the confidentiality of the personal information contained on these CDs, the CD Manager must go through a comprehensive SSA Security Clearance prior to receiving any beneficiary CDs.

The CD manager must complete and submit to SSA the forms listed below:

- Optional Form 306, Declaration of Federal Employment
- Form FD-258, Applicant Fingerprint Chart
- Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) Authorization Form
- Standard Form (SF) 85, Questionnaire for Non-Sensitive Positions

To learn more about requesting a Beneficiary CD from MAXIMUS, go to [www.yourtickettowork.com](http://www.yourtickettowork.com).

For more information, contact your MAXIMUS Regional Representative by calling 1 (866) 949-ENVR (3687) (v) or 1 (866) 833-2967 (tty).

### *Working with Ticket Holders*

Choice is an underlying principle of the Ticket program. Ticket Holders can choose whether to participate in the program, when to use their Tickets, and where to seek assistance to enter the workforce (i.e., from an EN or from a State VR agency). ENs have choices too. In addition to choosing between the two EN payment systems (Outcome and Outcome/Milestone), ENs can choose what services they provide and which Ticket Holders they serve. These choices are important because the goal of the program is to ensure a good match between what a Ticket Holder needs to enter and maintain employment and the services the EN has to offer. For this reason, Ticket Holders often talk to several ENs before they decide where to assign their Tickets. Once a good match is found between a Ticket Holder and an EN, the following must occur:

- The Ticket Holder and the EN agree to work together and develop an Individual Work Plan (IWP) that spells out, among other things, the beneficiary's employment goal, the services the EN has agreed to provide to the beneficiary, the beneficiary's expected monthly earnings, and any commitment the beneficiary is making regarding his/her plans to go to work. To access an IWP template that meets the requirements of the Ticket program, go to: [www.yourtickettowork.com](http://www.yourtickettowork.com).
- Once signed by the Ticket Holder and a representative of the EN, the IWP is submitted to MAXIMUS for approval. When MAXIMUS approves the IWP, the Ticket is subsequently assigned to the EN.





- The EN provides the services and supports outlined in the approved IWP, including placing the beneficiary in employment.
- The EN collects evidence of the Ticket Holder's earnings and, when the earnings reach a level to trigger Milestone and/or Outcome payments, the EN submits a Payment Request Form and evidence of the Ticket Holder's earnings to MAXIMUS. To learn about the three different ways an EN can submit or request evidence of earnings, check out the chapter on "How Ticket Payments Are Processed." In addition, a copy of the Payment Request Guide can be found at: [www.yourtickettowork.com](http://www.yourtickettowork.com).

NOTE: As long as a beneficiary is still receiving cash benefits from Social Security, she/he must report wage information to SSA. The documentation of earnings that an EN submits for payments under the Ticket program does not satisfy SSA's requirements for a beneficiary to report earnings related to continued eligibility for disability benefits. SSA recently implemented a telephone wage reporting system for SSI beneficiaries. The information that a beneficiary reports through this system can be used by SSA to determine if an EN working with that beneficiary would qualify for an EN payment.

- Once the beneficiary is working at a level that justifies a Milestone or Outcome payment to the EN, the EN submits a Payment Request Form to MAXIMUS along with some type of evidence of work and earnings (see section on Payment Options). For a copy of the Payment Request Form, go to [www.yourtickettowork.com](http://www.yourtickettowork.com).
- Payments are direct deposited into the EN's bank account.
- The EN receives a 1099 form from SSA shortly after the first of the next tax year reflecting the income received through the Ticket program. The income received is taxable, unless your organization does not pay taxes.
- If at any point in time, the EN or the beneficiary chooses to exercise their right to dissolve the relationship (i.e., unassign the beneficiary's Ticket), MAXIMUS must be contacted in writing.

## *How Is the Ticket Assigned or Unassigned?*

### **Ticket Assignment**

If the Ticket Holder chooses to work with your organization as an EN, both you and the Ticket Holder must complete and agree upon an Individual Work Plan (IWP). A copy of an IWP template that meets all of the requirements of the Ticket program can be downloaded at: [www.yourtickettowork.com/training](http://www.yourtickettowork.com/training). Once the IWP is submitted to and approved by MAXIMUS, the Ticket is assigned to the EN.

If the Ticket Holder wishes to work with a State VR agency, the beneficiary and the State VR Counselor must develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). Both must agree to the terms of the IPE. If the State VR agency elects to be paid under an EN payment system, the Ticket is assigned to that agency. If the State VR agency elects to be paid under the Cost Reimbursement system, the Ticket, although not assigned to VR, is not otherwise assignable to an EN.

The IWP or IPE outlines the services and/or supports necessary to assist the Ticket Holder in achieving his/her chosen employment goal. It spells out what services the EN or State VR agency has agreed to provide and any associated responsibilities the Ticket Holder has agreed to assume.

### **Unassigning a Ticket**

If the Ticket Holder assigned his/her Ticket to an EN or a State VR agency that elects to be paid under an EN payment system, the Ticket Holder has the right to take his/her Ticket out of assignment at a later date. The Ticket Holder must notify MAXIMUS in writing that she/he wishes to take the Ticket out of assignment. The written notice to MAXIMUS must include the beneficiary's name and the name of the EN currently holding the Ticket assignment. It must be signed and dated by the beneficiary and faxed to 1-703-683-3289 or mailed to MAXIMUS-TTW, P.O. Box 1433, Alexandria, VA 22313.

For an EN to unassign a Ticket, the EN must submit a written request to MAXIMUS. The written request must include the EN's name and EIN number, and the beneficiary's name and Social Security Number. The request must be signed and dated and faxed to 1-703-683-3289 or mailed to MAXIMUS-TTW, P.O. Box 1433, Alexandria, VA 22313.

The Ticket will no longer be assigned to that EN or State VR agency effective with the first day of the month following the month in which the beneficiary or the EN notifies MAXIMUS in writing that they wish to take the Ticket out of assignment. The Ticket Holder may then re-assign his/her Ticket.

If the EN decides it no longer wishes to work with the Ticket Holder, the EN notifies MAXIMUS in writing that it is ending its agreement with the Ticket Holder. The Ticket Holder is then responsible for finding a new EN to continue in the program, if the Ticket Holder wishes to do so.

Regardless of who terminates the relationship, the beneficiary has a 90-day period within which to assign his/her Ticket to another EN (or start working with the State VR agency) to maintain his/her protection against a medical Continuing Disability Review (CDR). The Ticket can still be assigned after 90 days, but SSA could initiate a medical CDR after 90 days and before the Ticket is assigned again. If a CDR is initiated, SSA will carry it through to completion even if the Ticket is re-assigned.

**IMPORTANT REMINDER:** A request to unassign a Ticket, whether from a Ticket Holder or an EN, should never be emailed because it contains both the name and the Social Security Number of the beneficiary.





# Case Studies:

## Creative Ways to Implement the Ticket Program

### *Case Study #1: The Service Provider EN Working with For-Profit Employers*

The Service Provider (TSP) works with several private employers in Harristown, USA. As the economy worsened and the unemployment rate rose, TSP found that there were fewer jobs available for the job seekers it served. TSP became an EN and began offering employers a hiring incentive of \$1,000 when the Ticket Holder it placed remained on the job for a minimum of one year. All of the employers TSP worked with were also eligible for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) when they hired a Ticket Holder. TSP helped the employers apply for the WOTC. The WOTC reduces tax-paying organization's Federal tax liability by \$2,400 during the first year of employment for each Ticket Holder it employs for a minimum of 400 hours. Over the course of a year, employers hiring Ticket Holders through TSP saved \$3,400 when they hired a Ticket Holder who stayed with the company for a minimum of one year (\$1,000 TSP Hiring Incentive and the \$2,400 WOTC). These incentives allowed Ticket Holders to compete for the fewer number of jobs available in their community.

### *Case Study #2: An Individual as an EN*

James Stevens is a Ticket Holder who wants a job. His neighbor, Bob Frazier, is a retired VR counselor who has community-wide contacts with employers. Bob is interested in making some extra income without working full-time, so he agrees to help James with his job search. Bob submits the EN RFP and is awarded an EN contract. James assigns his Ticket to Bob and they develop an IWP, which is submitted to MAXIMUS. Bob is successful in helping James find a job with a local employer. As James' earnings exceed the designed levels for EN Milestones, Bob completes the Payment Request Form and submits it to MAXIMUS with James' pay stubs. James has a few friends who are also Ticket Holders and could use some help finding employment. Bob agrees to assist them, obtains their Ticket assignments, and is able to generate extra income without working full-time.

### *Case Study #3: A Partnership Plus Case*

Sam Snow seeks assistance from the State VR agency. VR opens his case, and Sam and his VR counselor negotiate an IPE. The State VR agency chooses to serve Sam under the Cost Reimbursement program. The State VR agency provides the services listed in the IPE and closes the case with Sam, who has been stabilized in employment for 90 days. Sam was earning just above SGA



during his first 3 months of employment. Sam assigns his Ticket to Acme Employment Consultants (AEC) to receive ongoing support services. AEC is using the Outcome/Milestone Payment system. One calendar month after receiving Sam's Ticket assignment, AEC can begin submitting for Phase 2 Milestone payments. Sam continues working and enters zero cash benefit status after receiving six Phase 2 Milestone payments. At that point, AEC begins receiving Outcome payments and the State VR agency can submit a Cost Reimbursement claim since Sam has been working 9 months with earnings above SGA. When Sam has completed 12 months of work in the zero cash benefit status and AEC has submitted for the 12th Outcome payment, MAXIMUS will review the case and determine if any Phase 2 Milestone payments would be owed to AEC as a Reconciliation Payment. If Sam were a SSDI beneficiary, AEC would receive a lump sum Reconciliation Payment for the remaining five Phase 2 Milestone payments. If Sam were a SSI recipient, AEC would receive a lump sum Reconciliation Payment for the remaining twelve Phase 2 Milestone payments.



# How Are Ticket Payments Processed?

Milestone and Outcome payments are requested by submitting the EN Payment Request Form and documentation of a Ticket Holder's work and earnings. The Payment Request Form can be found at: [www.yourtickettowork.com](http://www.yourtickettowork.com). There are three ways to document earnings.

## *Option 1: Evidentiary Payment Request (EPR)*

When you use the EPR method, supporting documentation must be direct evidence of earnings, such as:

- Pay stubs;
- Employer-prepared/signed earnings statements; or
- Records of monthly earnings. These can be accessed for some individuals through The Work Number, an income verification service found at [www.theworknumber.com](http://www.theworknumber.com).

## *Option 2: Certification Payment Request (CPR)*

Documentation that must accompany a Certification Payment Request (CPR), which includes a statement of agreement to repay, includes:

- A recent, dated contact with beneficiary/employer, or
- An Earnings Inquiry Request (EIR) response showing earnings of 3 times the SGA amount for the quarter, or
- Information from the National Directory of New Hires (NDNH), or
- A Self-Employment Income (SEI) Form.

## *Auto-Pay*

SSA has developed an Auto-Pay option that uses data from the National Database on New Hires (NDNH) and SSA's data on payment status to confirm a beneficiary's earnings and zero cash benefit status (i.e., the criteria used to trigger Outcome payments). This option is currently available only for Outcome payment 13 and beyond. Auto-Pay provides a wonderful opportunity to decrease the paperwork that an EN is required to submit for payment.

Using the Auto-Pay option does increase the risk that an EN will get an overpayment since the EN does not have any direct evidence that the Ticket Holder is still working. Consequently, any EN that chooses to use this option must sign and submit a "blanket



repayment agreement” for those instances when SSA makes a payment to an EN and later finds that the criteria for the payment had not been met.

General information regarding SSA’s Auto-Pay option can be found at [www.yourtickettowork.com](http://www.yourtickettowork.com). See the link to the New ‘Auto-Pay’ option available for ENs. To download an Auto-Pay Form, go to: [www.yourtickettowork.com/payment\\_options](http://www.yourtickettowork.com/payment_options).

### *For Complete Ticket Payment and Payment Request Information*

The Ticket to Work Payment Request Guide: Reference Guide for ENs and State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies can be found at: [www.yourtickettowork.com](http://www.yourtickettowork.com).

For a copy of the EN Payment Request Form, go to: [www.yourtickettowork.com](http://www.yourtickettowork.com).

# Technical Assistance

## *Exploratory and Application Support*

CESSI, SSA's PMRO, will assist your organization to explore the benefits of becoming an EN and with completing the application process. CESSI Account Managers are assigned to ENs based on a geographic regions of the country and by area of expertise (e.g., service providers, mental health, post-secondary education, workforce development system, employers, etc.). To receive individualized EN application technical assistance, contact CESSI at 1-877-743-8237 (v/tty) or via email at: [tickettowork@cessi.net](mailto:tickettowork@cessi.net).

CESSI also offers EN Application Walk-Through teleconferences every other Wednesday at 2:00 pm EST. These free teleconferences will guide you through the entire application, step-by-step, page-by-page. Call 1-877-743-8237 (v/tty) or sign up by emailing: [application@cessi.net](mailto:application@cessi.net).

## *Operational and Payment Support*

MAXIMUS, SSA's OSM for the Ticket program, handles all aspects of the program following approval of an EN's application. After an EN is approved, the CESSI Account Manager will connect the EN with a corresponding Regional Account Representative at MAXIMUS. MAXIMUS offers a wide array of training (e.g., Ticket Training Tuesdays) and support services (e.g., sample Individual Work Plan, assistance in submitting and tracking claims through to payment, etc.) to help get ENs started and operating as part of the Ticket program.

Contact MAXIMUS at 1-866-949-ENVR (3687) (v) or 1-866-833-2967 (tty), or visit the MAXIMUS website at: [www.yourtickettowork.com](http://www.yourtickettowork.com).

## *Ongoing Support and Training*

### **Ticket Training Tuesdays**

Interactive training modules conducted via weekly conference calls are designed to assist ENs with the fundamentals of working within the Ticket program. These calls offer a great opportunity to train new and existing staff and to network with fellow ENs and EN Ambassadors to share tips and promising practices.

The "Ticket Training Tuesdays" calls begin at 1:00 pm EST. To join the calls, simply dial 1-800-480-6924 and provide the participant code: "Ticket to Work" and your name and contact information to the operator. You can download teleconference materials at the [www.yourtickettowork.com](http://www.yourtickettowork.com) website. There is no need to pre-register.



For more information on Ticket Training Tuesdays, please contact MAXIMUS at 1-866-949-ENVR (3687).

### **Ticket Training Tuesdays CDs**

This training series is also available for free on CD-Rom. To request a CD, email: [ENOperations@yourtickettowork.com](mailto:ENOperations@yourtickettowork.com). Simply provide your name, address and desired quantity.

### **Enhanced EN Directory Listing (Notes Field)**

An enhanced EN Directory listing is available by placing a text message in the Notes field to further define an EN's services and advertise additional services, partners, or accomplishments. Text messages can be up to 270 characters in length and will appear beneath the organization's name on the EN Directory that is mailed to beneficiaries and available at: [www.yourtickettowork.com](http://www.yourtickettowork.com).

### **Beneficiary Referral List CD**

A list of beneficiaries with Tickets available for assignment in the EN's designated service area is available to ENs that have a designated CD Manager who has gone through an SSA security clearance. Because of the confidential nature of the information included in the CD, this person is the only one that is permitted to handle the beneficiary CD which must be kept in a secure location. If other EN staff will be receiving confidential information from the CD Manager, they will have to go through a simple security clearance that requires the submission of the person's name, Social Security Number, date of birth and city of birth.

For information on the Beneficiary Referral List CD and how to obtain SSA security clearances, go to: [www.yourtickettowork.com](http://www.yourtickettowork.com).

### **EN-Vocational Rehabilitation Training Queue**

You may call 1-866-949-ENVR (3687) and select your preferred language.

Prompts 2 and 4 will reach an EN-VR training representative to answer any of your training questions.

# Resources on Social Security Work Incentives

You do not need to be an expert on Social Security Work Incentives to be an EN. Several resources are available to assist SSA beneficiaries as they move toward independence through work.

## *What Are Work Incentives?*

Work Incentives are rules intended to help Social Security disability beneficiaries go to work. Some Work Incentives permit beneficiaries to reduce their countable income so that they can keep their disability benefits while they explore work.

For additional information on Work Incentives, download The Red Book – A Guide to Work Incentives, at: [www.socialsecurity.gov/redbook/](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/redbook/).

At SSA's Work Site ([www.socialsecurity.gov/work](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/work)) you can find additional information on Work Incentives and resources available in your area.

## *Community Resources Available to Help Beneficiaries with SSA Work Incentives*

### **Work Incentives Planning and Assistance**

Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) projects are funded by SSA to provide benefits planning and assistance to people who are recipients of SSI and/or SSDI. WIPAs employ Community Work Incentives Coordinators (CWICs) who work with SSA beneficiaries with disabilities on job placement, benefits planning and career development. They assist beneficiaries with information about Work Incentives, benefits planning and making informed choices about work. WIPAs serve all SSA beneficiaries with disabilities, including transition-age youth, providing benefits planning and assistance services on request and as resources permit. A beneficiary does not have to be a Ticket Holder to access WIPA services. CWICs also provide general information about potential employer-based or Federally-subsidized health benefits coverage available to beneficiaries once they enter the workforce. The CWICs also provide information to SSA beneficiaries on protection and advocacy services available to them. To locate the WIPA in your area, visit: <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/oesp/providers.nsf/bystate>.

### **Protection & Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS)**

The State Protection and Advocacy systems are publicly-funded entities that provide protection and advocacy services free of charge to individuals with disabilities. They receive funding to serve different populations of individuals with disabilities (e.g., individuals with developmental disabilities and individuals with mental illness) and to address specific types of issues (e.g., discrimination in employment). They receive funds







from SSA to assist beneficiaries with disabilities with a variety of employment-related issues, including resolving disputes between Ticket Holders and ENs.

For a list of P&As throughout the country, go to:

<https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/oesp/providers.nsf/bystate/>.

# Social Security Beneficiaries and the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit is a Federal tax credit that reduces the Federal tax liability of tax-paying organizations that hire individuals from certain targeted groups. These employers may have their Federal taxes reduced by up to \$2,400 for each qualified employee, and up to \$4,800 for each qualified veteran with a disability, in their first year of work. Social Security beneficiaries described below may qualify their employers for the WOTC.

First, SSDI and SSI beneficiaries who are clients of a State VR agency, or who assigned their Tickets to an EN and are referred to the employer upon completion of (or while receiving) services through the State VR agency under an IPE, or from an EN under an IWP may qualify an employer for the WOTC.

Second, SSI recipients who received SSI benefits for any month ending within the 60-day period ending on the hiring date (the day the individual is hired by the employer) may qualify their employer for the WOTC.

“Hiring date” means the date that a definite oral or written agreement to employ is reached between a job seeker and a prospective employer.

NOTE: An individual is not considered a member of a targeted group for purposes of WOTC unless the designated local agency certifies him or her as a member. The designated local agency is the State Employment Security Agency now sometimes called the State Workforce Agency. Also, there are other requirements which must be met before an employer can claim a tax credit for hiring a member of a targeted group.

Internet sites providing information about the WOTC are:

- United States Department of Labor:
  - [www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/opptax/](http://www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/opptax/)
- Internal Revenue Service:
  - [www.irs.gov/publications/p954/index.html](http://www.irs.gov/publications/p954/index.html);
  - [www.irs.gov/formspubs/article/0,,Id=177948.00.html](http://www.irs.gov/formspubs/article/0,,Id=177948.00.html)
  - or call 1-800-829-3676.





# Models for Large Service Providers

The Ticket program has a number of models for large networks of service providers. For example, Centers for Independent Living and State Independent Living Centers, Goodwill, United Cerebral Palsy, Easter Seals, ARC, faith-based and community-based organizations are all represented in these models. The Ticket program recognizes that many of these networks are comprised of a national headquarters and/or central membership organization with actual facilities, service delivery sites or affiliates in various locations around the country. Some have regional, state or local chapters, organizations and/or units. The flexibility of the Ticket program offers any number of possible options for structuring an EN arrangement for these networks of providers.

One model, especially appropriate for organizations where every location is a large entity in its own right, allows each entity to be a separate EN.

Another model, however, has the national office as the “EN of Record” with selected sites or all sites throughout the country to be listed as locations for actual service delivery. The EN of Record assumes most or all of the administrative duties associated with participation in the Ticket program (e.g., Ticket assignment, tracking work and earnings, and submitting for EN payments), leaving the local sites to provide services and supports to Ticket Holders. In most cases, the local sites are also responsible for working with Ticket Holders to develop their IWP. This model requires fewer staff to be trained to handle administrative duties, allowing local EN staff to focus on service delivery. The EN of Record has primary responsibility for maintaining contact with SSA and MAXIMUS and receives any payments due. The national office and the service locations have an agreement that spells out how EN payments received from SSA will be shared (e.g., 5 to 15% kept by the national office to pay for handling the administrative tasks and 85 to 95% going to the location that served the Ticket Holder that triggered the EN payment).

When a national organization decides to become an EN of Record, it does not preclude some of its larger affiliates or chapters from applying independently to be free-standing ENs. The EN of Record model is a simple way to ensure that smaller affiliates or chapters are not left out of the potential funding available through the Ticket program.

Another EN model recognizes that collaborative partnerships can be effective in many communities. Rather than competing to serve Ticket Holders, several organizations may create a partnership or coalition of providers that apply to be a single EN. Each organization provides the services it has to offer, giving Ticket Holders more options for addressing their barriers to successful employment. Under this model, one of the partners steps forward to submit the EN RFP and functions as the EN of Record. Similar to the national organization model, the EN of Record typically handles Ticket assignments and receives EN payments which are then divided among the partnering organizations according to an agreed upon plan or written agreement.







# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

## *Funding/EN Payments*

### **Can an EN continue to receive referrals from State VR agencies?**

Yes. A provider can serve as an EN and continue to partner with VR. It is important to note that there are rules regarding Ticket assignment and EN payments for those clients served by both State VR agencies and ENs.

To learn more about how you can partner with your State VR agency, check out information on the new Partnership Plus service delivery option. Partnership Plus offers a unique opportunity for a State VR agency and an EN to provide sequential services for the same Ticket Holder, and VR can receive payments under the traditional Cost Reimbursement program (only available to VR) and the EN can receive Phase 2 Milestone and Outcome payments as the Ticket Holder achieves the required levels of work and earnings. To learn more about Partnership Plus, check out the online Partnership Plus Toolkit at: [partnershipplus.cessi.net/](http://partnershipplus.cessi.net/).

### **Will Ticket to Work revenue affect other funding streams?**

As far as SSA is concerned, EN payments are considered an additional, complementary funding source. SSA has no requirements or restrictions on how EN payments may be used. However, depending on where the EN gets other sources of funding, there may be restrictions on how EN payments can be used. For example, the U.S. Department of Education would view EN payments as “program income” and provisions addressing how program income can be used are spelled out in the Education Department’s General Administrative Requirements (EDGAR). Consequently, organizations that are applying to be ENs are encouraged to explore any restrictions that might result for other funding sources.

### **Do ENs receive upfront funding?**

No. The Ticket program is an outcome-based program. Revenue is realized when the Ticket Holder achieves certain employment-related Milestones and/or Outcomes that occur after Ticket assignment and after job placement.

To help ENs that need upfront capital, MAXIMUS and SSA developed an “EN Capitalization Resource Directory.” This Resource Directory is designed to help organizations find information and resources on different funding sources. This is available at: [www.yourtickettowork.com/en\\_cap\\_resource](http://www.yourtickettowork.com/en_cap_resource).



## **How do ENs get paid?**

An EN must submit a Payment Request Form as well as documentation of a Ticket Holder's earnings. Upon receipt of these two items and verification of earnings (i.e., if direct evidence of earnings was not submitted with the payment request), SSA sends notification that a payment request has been approved, then deposits the payment electronically to the EN's bank account.

The Ticket to Work Payment Request Guide and a copy of the Employment Network Payment Request Form can be found at: [www.yourtickettowork.com](http://www.yourtickettowork.com). For additional payment resources and forms, go to: [www.yourtickettowork.com/payment\\_options](http://www.yourtickettowork.com/payment_options). You can also submit an Earnings Inquiry Request (EIR) directly through the web at this site.

## **How can I determine if a beneficiary has worked in the 18 months before the Ticket assignment?**

There is an "18 Month Prior Earnings Tool" on the MAXIMUS website that can be completed online when exploring a Ticket Holder's work history. This tool allows an EN to figure out which Phase 1 Milestone payments may be unavailable based on a Ticket Holder's work history in the 18 months prior to Ticket assignment. This tool can be found at: [www.yourtickettowork.com/training\\_2](http://www.yourtickettowork.com/training_2).

## **If I have the Ticket assignment and don't have access to direct evidence of a Ticket Holder's earnings, can I still submit for an EN payment?**

Yes. To request earnings information for Ticket Holders assigned to your organization prior to submitting payment requests, simply submit the online Earnings Inquiry Request (EIR) located at: [www.yourtickettowork.com/payment\\_options](http://www.yourtickettowork.com/payment_options). Simply fill in the fields and click "Send". Upon receiving the EIR, MAXIMUS will review quarterly wage earnings records available to Social Security and respond in writing indicating whether the Ticket Holder has reported earnings at or above three times the Trial Work level or the SGA level for each calendar quarter available. Wage earnings at this level in a quarter may mean that the beneficiary earned over SGA for each of the 3 months within the quarter. This, in turn, may indicate that your EN is eligible for payment. Because there is some lag time between the actual earnings period and the data appearance in Social Security administrative records, only calendar quarters ending over 5 months ago will be available.

Please note the following points:

- Only written EIR requests will be accepted. Responses will not be given to verbal requests.
- Because the quarterly wage records available to Social Security store

earnings data for only the last 8 quarters, the oldest information available is 8 quarters plus 8 months back (for lag time), or just over 2 ½ years.

- Earnings information is first available 8 months after the time period in which it was earned: 3 months for the end of a quarter plus 5 months for the records to appear.
- Earnings information is not available for time periods prior to the date of Ticket assignment.
- This earnings information is intended to give you an indication of the beneficiary's level of earnings to assist you in deciding if you should request a payment. The information does not guarantee that you are eligible for an EN payment. Several other variables apply when granting EN payments. Even if the beneficiary is reporting earnings over three times SGA for a quarter, the only way to determine if a beneficiary has achieved payment outcomes is to submit a payment request to MAXIMUS.

Unfortunately, not all earnings information is available in Social Security administrative records. For example, earnings may not be available for Ticket Holders who are self-employed or work for the Federal Government.

**If an EN assists a Ticket Holder to secure a position as an independent contractor and the person receives a paycheck from the employer but the employer does not withhold taxes, can the EN bill SSA when the Ticket Holder's gross earnings exceed the Trial Work level that triggers Phase 1 Milestone payments?**

In this situation, the Ticket Holder who is an independent contractor is self-employed. In order to submit for any Milestone or Outcome payments for a Ticket Holder who is engaged in self-employment, the EN must submit a quarterly or annual statement of the beneficiary's earnings, referred to as "Net Earnings from Self-Employment" (NESE), along with a record of quarterly and annual payment of taxes to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). EN payments for self-employed Ticket Holders can be delayed significantly because the SSA field office must verify the Ticket Holder's earnings to SSA's records before any Milestone payment can be made.

## *Beneficiaries*

**Are beneficiaries required to use their Tickets?**

No. The Ticket program is totally voluntary. A Ticket eligible beneficiary (Ticket Holder) can choose if, when, and where to use his/her Ticket. There is no penalty for not participating.



## Does the beneficiary actually receive a paper Ticket?

Yes, all Ticket-eligible beneficiaries, ages 18 through 64, have received or will receive a Ticket in the mail. Since beneficiaries can choose whether and when to use their Tickets, many have thrown away or misplaced their paper Tickets. A Ticket-eligible beneficiary does not have to have the paper Ticket to participate in the program. If a beneficiary does not have his/her paper Ticket, an approved EN or the beneficiary can contact MAXIMUS to see if the beneficiary is Ticket-eligible, to determine whether the Ticket is available for assignment, and to determine the remaining value of that Ticket.

## Will a beneficiary whose VR case was closed within the past year receive a new Ticket, if s/he qualifies, and be able to assign the Ticket to an EN to receive follow-along services?

If the beneficiary is still receiving cash benefits, she/he will still have a Ticket in effect; therefore there is no need to issue a new Ticket.

If the State VR agency served the beneficiary under the Cost Reimbursement program, Phase 2 Milestone and Outcome payments could still be available to the EN if the beneficiary reaches the earnings levels required for those payments. If the VR agency served the beneficiary as an EN under the Ticket program, it may be necessary to split Ticket payments if the beneficiary assigns his/her Ticket to your EN after VR closes the case. How the payments would be split would depend on what services VR provided and what services your EN provided, and how those services contributed to the success of the Ticket Holder.

**Social Security Administration**

**Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency**

Ticket Number  
123-45-6789TW

Claim Account Number  
987-65-4321 W

Issue Date

This ticket is issued to you by the Social Security Administration under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program. If you want help in returning to work or going to work for the first time, you may offer this ticket to an Employment Network of your choosing or take it to your State vocational rehabilitation agency for services. If you choose an Employment Network and it agrees to take your ticket, or if you choose your State agency and you qualify for services, these providers can offer you services to help you go to work.

An Employment Network provides the services at no cost to you. The Social Security Administration will pay the Employment Network if you assign your ticket to it, and the Employment Network helps you go to work and complies with other requirements of the Program. An Employment Network serving under the Program has agreed to abide by the rules and regulations of the Program under the terms of its agreement with the Social Security Administration for providing services under the Program. Your State agency can tell you about its rules for getting services.

*[Signature]*  
Commissioner of Social Security

## *Employment Networks*

### Are ENs required to serve every Ticket Holder that seeks assistance?

No, unless otherwise mandated by different legislation or rules governing their organization. Through the EN RFP (application) and the subsequent EN contract with SSA, each EN elects which specific services and supports it will offer and what geographical area it will serve. An EN can even specify that it serves only certain subsets of the beneficiary population (e.g., individuals who are blind or Native Americans living on a particular reservation). Since the goal of the program is to have a good match between the services the Ticket Holder

needs to achieve his/her employment goal and the services the EN that takes the Ticket assignment has to offer, an EN can turn down Ticket assignments. In most situations, an EN will be able to determine which Ticket Holders it is most qualified to work with based on an assessment of the services the EN has to offer, the staff expertise, the EN's capacity, and the Ticket Holder's employment goal(s).

### **What if the Ticket Holder decides to work with a different EN?**

A Ticket Holder can choose at any time to seek the services of a different EN. If a Ticket Holder decides to work with another EN, or with the State VR agency, she/he must make a written request to MAXIMUS to unassign his/her Ticket from the current EN prior to assigning it to a different EN. In some cases, the two ENs may find it necessary to share EN payments that are earned based on the services each provided and how those services contributed to the Ticket Holder's successful employment.

### **What if the EN decides to no longer work with the Ticket Holder?**

An EN can also choose at any time to terminate a relationship with a Ticket Holder. The EN must notify MAXIMUS in writing that it wishes to have that Ticket unassigned. The Ticket Holder is then responsible for finding a new EN to continue in the Ticket program if she or he wishes to do so.

### **How do ENs and Ticket Holders connect?**

When Ticket Holders receive notice in the mail from SSA that they are eligible to participate in the program, they are encouraged to contact MAXIMUS to learn about available ENs in the area and the services they provide. Ticket Holders can also view an online EN directory. This directory is open to the public. Should a Ticket Holder be interested, they can contact any ENs they wish. The EN directory is at: [www.yourtickettowork.com/endir](http://www.yourtickettowork.com/endir).

Approved ENs may obtain basic contact information on Ticket Holders if someone on staff at the EN has been designated as the Beneficiary CD Manager and has completed a full SSA Security Clearance.

SSA works with CESSI and the WIPAs in each state to host local Work Incentive Seminars, better known as WISE Events. These events are designed to bring Work Incentive planners, ENs, and Ticket Holders together to learn about SSA Work Incentives, including the Ticket program, and to explore options for entering or re-entering the workforce. These events offer beneficiaries the opportunity to meet with ENs and other community representatives who can assist them as they explore work. To learn more about WISE events and find out when WISE events will occur in your area, visit: [www.cessi.net/wise](http://www.cessi.net/wise).





**If an EN accepts a Ticket assignment while functioning under the Outcome payment system, changes to the Outcome/Milestone payment system after a year of operation, and then places that beneficiary in employment (e.g., with earnings below the amount designated for SGA) can the EN switch that Ticket Holder to the Outcome/Milestone payment system and bill for the Phase 1 Milestones?**

No. When an EN chooses the Outcome payment system and after the required 12-month period switches to the Outcome/Milestone payment system, all of the Tickets assigned during the year the EN was operating under the Outcome payment system must remain under the Outcome payment system during the entire time the EN is assisting that Ticket Holder. This is true regardless of when the Ticket Holder goes to work and what the Ticket Holder's earnings are.

### *Distribution of Tickets*

**With the new regulations in effect, will Tickets be mailed to everyone who is eligible to participate in the Ticket program, or will they only be mailed to individuals being determined eligible for disability benefits and beneficiaries previously classified as medical improvement expected (MIE)?**

New Tickets will not be sent routinely to beneficiaries who previously received Tickets in the mail. Under the new Ticket regulations, Tickets will be mailed to individuals as they are determined eligible for SSI and SSDI benefits. In addition, all beneficiaries who previously had not received a Ticket due to their classification as MIE, received a Ticket in the mail between December 2008 and February 2009. However, it is important to remember that a beneficiary does not need to have the paper Ticket in hand to participate in the Ticket program. Any beneficiary interested in pursuing services and supports to go to work should contact MAXIMUS at 1-866-YOURTICKET (1-866-968-7842) or TDD at 1-866-TDD2WORK (1-866-833-2967) to verify his/her Ticket eligibility.

### *Privacy Act Requirements*

**Do participants in the Ticket program have to adhere to Privacy Act requirements?**

As an EN, your organization will have to agree to protect the privacy and confidentiality of beneficiary information entrusted to you by SSA. Privacy Act requirements, along with the applicable Federal law, regulations, and procedures governing the Ticket program, are covered specifically in the Statement of Work (Sections 5 and 6) of both the EN RFP and your individual EN contract. Please understand that as a government contractor you are contractually obligated to abide by these rules and to ensure that the employees in your organization with access to confidential beneficiary information understand these rules as well.